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remarked, these volumes are not a biography, but they are uncommonly full of original material for the student of history.

WILLIAM NELSON.

The Contest over the Ratification of the Federal Constitution in the State of Massachusetts. By SAMUEL BANNISTER HARDING, A.M., Assistant Professor of History in Indiana University. [Harvard Historical Studies, Volume II.] (New York : Longmans, Green and Co. 1896. Pp. 194.)

IN this monograph the author proceeds first to examine the conditions which lay behind the decision of the Massachusetts convention of 1788. He shows by a brief survey of the political events anterior to this time that the people of the state were familiar with the idea of discussing and deciding in town meeting important constitutional questions, and had thereby gained a considerable degree of self-confidence. He finds the chief opposition to the Federal Constitution showing itself in three forms: distrust of delegated power; conflict of interests between the agricultural and the commercial sections of the state; the antagonism between the aristocratic and the democratic elements of society, which last he regards as the underlying cause of all the opposition. How, in the convention at Boston, the friends of the new constitution met their more numerous opponents with arguments and mollified them with concessions till they succeeded in winning over a sufficient number to carry their point, is especially well brought out. In his discussion of the part taken by Hancock in the contest Mr. Harding throws new light on the details of the bargain by which the governor was adroitly made to play into the hands of the Federals in return for their support in the next election, and other pledges of a less tangible character. The bibliographical note and the list of authorities cited in the appendix are especially commendable features of the monograph.

On the whole, however, there seems to be a certain lack of balance and completeness, arising apparently either from a one-sided view or from haste in preparation. In Mr. Harding's paper on "Party Struggles over the First Pennsylvania Constitution"¹ he shows very clearly two things: first, the genesis of the two parties that fought later over the Federal Constitution, as revealed in the contests over the state constitutions of 1776 and 1790, in the various sessions of the legislature and in the state elections; second, the survival of these parties after the ratification of the Federal Constitution, and the trend of their later development. In his discussion of the Massachusetts ratification there is evident need of just such a political setting as he has given to the Pennsylvania contest. Massachusetts, for instance, voted on two state constitutions, one in 1778 and one in 1780, yet we are told almost nothing as to the causes of the rejection of the one and the adoption of the other, nor of the distribution of the vote on these important measures. The vote of the

¹ *Annual Report of the American Historical Association for 1894*, pp. 371-402.

towns in 1788 is thus left quite unrelated to the preceding votes, a study of which in this connection should reveal new and valuable material. In a similar way, quite as much space is devoted to disproving the charge of bribery in the convention as is given to the discussion of Shays's Rebellion. Yet this uprising caused the gravest apprehensions throughout the country, and the state legislature was so much in sympathy with the movement that at the special session called in September, 1786, a strong party in the House of Representatives nearly succeeded in preventing active measures against the insurgents. What gives still greater importance to the uprising is the fact that its active supporters numbered nearly one-fifth of the population in the three western counties and that two years later some twenty former members of Shays's army are reported to have been sent as delegates to the ratifying convention itself. Furthermore, to ignore the anarchistic utterances of the county conventions of Berkshire, Hampshire, Worcester and Middlesex counties, and to pass by, as Mr. Harding does, without adequate treatment, the widespread belief in and demand for stay and tender laws among the towns of these four counties, is to overlook some of the most important of the concrete and tangible sources of the opposition to the Federal Constitution.

The most serious omission, however, in the whole monograph is the complete absence of any reference to the western third of Massachusetts (the tier of towns along the eastern bank of the Connecticut river and all towns west of it) as a distinct section, possessing abundance of free land and the most fertile district in the state, with a population increasing from two to five times as fast as the general average of the state, having commercial connections chiefly with New York and Newport, and hence, as far as the rest of the state was concerned, separate in its interests, its politics and its future. Nearly one-half its votes were cast for the ratification of the Constitution, and this fact makes it plain that it belongs neither with the interior, which voted quite unanimously against ratification, nor with the coast region, which decidedly favored it. The explanation of the vote given in the monograph is so obviously meant for the region largely east of the Connecticut river that we can not take it as applying to any other part of the state. To understand the Federalism of this part of the state, we must examine the conditions in the entire Connecticut valley, of which it is a part. This great river valley, peopled by settlers from Connecticut and the eastern counties, was to the rest of New England in earlier times what the Ohio valley was to the states of the Atlantic seaboard after the Revolution. It was their frontier, occupied at first only by hardy pioneers. It bore the brunt of the French and Indian attacks (Massachusetts suffering most severely), and in the end developed a new type of men, the "river gods of the Connecticut," who faced not eastward, but westward and northwestward toward the unoccupied lands of the Mohawk valley. Naturally, then, the people of this great valley took an original and independent attitude on the question of ratification, the vote as a whole being quite evenly divided between the friends and the enemies of the new Constitution.

We must conclude, therefore, that while Mr. Harding has done excellent service in his monograph by gathering evidence as to the contemporary opinions of the period and by using this material to bring out many new phases of his subject, yet he has failed to take the larger view. The relations of the contest over the ratification in Massachusetts to those before and after it in the whole history of state politics; the great importance of the economic factors in the final decision; and, lastly, the substantial unity of the struggle throughout New England—these essentials for a complete and impartial treatment of the subject the author certainly has not incorporated in these published results of his investigations.

O. G. LIBBY.

Constitutional History of the United States from their Declaration of Independence to the Close of their Civil War. By GEORGE TICKNOR CURTIS. In two volumes. Vol. II., edited by JOSEPH CULBERTSON CLAYTON. (New York: Harper and Brothers. 1896. Pp. x, 780.)

IN examining this volume its precise scope and its relations to the previous work of the author should first be observed. In 1854 and 1858 Mr. Curtis published, in two volumes, his work entitled *History of the Origin, Formation and Adoption of the Constitution of the United States*. More than thirty years later, in 1889, he began the publication of a work entitled *Constitutional History of the United States*, in two volumes. The first volume appeared in the same year. It was a mere reproduction of the former volumes, as the author states, "retaining the whole of my former text." Mr. Curtis then announced his intention, "at some future time, to follow down the constitutional history of the United States through the adoption of the first twelve, and the succeeding, amendments." The present book contains what he had prepared in execution of this purpose, now published, three years after his death, and comprises, with the appendix, 780 pages. It is made up, first, of thirteen chapters, 440 pages, substantially completed by Mr. Curtis, of which the editor states that he has "not felt at liberty to make any substantial change in, or addition to the text;" next, of the bare titles or headings for five additional chapters; and, lastly, of an appendix of 337 pages of historical documents and other matter.

For the original work, done in the fifties, Mr. Curtis had many high qualifications; and at that time the work was of prime value. The author's style was too formal and cold, even jejune, for the best literary effect; his tone was somewhat too dogmatic at times for historical discussions and statements; but his powerful grasp and array of facts, his skill of exposition and forensic debate, and the strength of his well-reasoned conclusions made the work at once, and have since kept it, one of authority with courts, publicists and scholars, upon almost all points strictly within the lines marked out by its title. The materials and topics